The Tragedy of Kerbala - Part II - Imam Hussain's Martyrdom

<"xml encoding="UTF-8?>

Part I

Al Husayn, the blessings of God be on him, set out from Mecca to Iraq on the day of Muslim's (attempted) rising in Kufa, that is the day of Tarwiya, after staying in Mecca for the rest of Shaban, the month of Ramadhan, Shawwal and Dhu al Qada and eight days of Dhu- al-Hijja in the year 60 A.H. (680). During his stay in Mecca, peace be on him, a number of Hijazis and Basrans had gathered around him, joining themselves to his household and his retainers (mawali).

When he determined on journeying to Iraq, he made the circumbulation of the (sacred) House and the ritual running between al-Safa and al-Marwa. Then he left the state of consecration (for the pilgrimage) (after) he had performed the lesser pilgrimage (umra) because he was not able to perform the greater pilgrimage (hajj). Through fear of being apprehended in Mecca, and being taken to Yazid b. Muawiya, he, peace be on him, had set out early with his House, his sons and those of his Shia who had joined him.

[As it has been reported to us:]

News of Muslim's (capture and death) had not yet reached him because (it had only happened) on the day he set out.

[It is reported that al-Farazdaq, the poet, said:]

I made the pilgrimage with my mother in the year 60 A.H. (680). I was driving her camel when I entered the sanctuary. (There) I met al-Husayn b. Ali, peace be on them, leaving Mecca accompanied by (some men carrying) swords and shields.

"Whose caravan is this?" I asked.

"Al-Husayn b. Ali's, peace be on them," was the reply. So I went up and greeted him. "May God grant you your request and (fulfil) your hope in what you want, by my father and mother, son of the Apostle of God," I said to him. "But what is making you hurry away from the pilgrimage?"

"If I did not hurry away, I would be apprehended," he replied. Then he asked me: "Who are you?"

"An Arab," I answered and he did not question me (about myself) any further.

"Tell me about the people you have left behind you," he asked.

"You have asked a good (question)," I answered. "The hearts of the people are with you but

their swords are against you. The decision comes from Heaven and God does what he wishes."

"You have spoken truly of the affair belonging to God," he replied. "Every day He (is involved) in (every) matter" (LV, 29) If fate sends down what we like and are pleased with, we praise God for His blessings. He is the One from Whom help should be sought in order to give thanks to Him. However, although fate may frustrate (our) hopes, yet He does not destroy (the souls of) those whose intention is the truth and whose hearts are pious."

"True, God brings you what you wish for (ultimately) and guards you against what you are threatened by," I said. Then I asked him about matters concerning vows and pilgrimage rites.

He told me about them and then moved his mount off, saying farewell, and so we parted. When al-Husayn b. Ali, peace be on them, left Mecca, Yahya b. Said b. al-'As met him with a group (of men). They had been sent to him by 'Amr b. Said. "Come back from where you are going," they ordered. But he refused (to obey) them and continued. The two groups came to blows and hit at each other with whips. However al-Husayn and his followers resisted fiercely. Al-Husayn continued until he got to al- Tanim. There he met a camel-train which had come from Yemen. He hired from its people (additional) camels for himself and his followers to ride. Then he said to the owners (of the camels): "Whoever (of you) wants to come with us to Iraq, we will pay his hire and enjoy his company and whoever wants to leave some way along the road we will pay his hire for the distance he has travelled." Some of the people went with him but others refused. Abd Allah b. Jafar sent his sons, Awn and Muhammad, after him, and he wrote a letter to him which he gave to them. In it, he said:

I ask you before God (to return) if you have set out when you see my letter. For I am very concerned because the direction in which you are heading will have within it your destruction, and the extirpation of your House. If you are destroyed today, the light of the land will be extinguished; for you are the (standard) of those who are rightly-guided and the hope of the believers. Do not hurry on your journey as I am following this letter.

Abd Allah, then went to 'Amr b. Sad and asked him to write to al-Husayn (offering him) a guarantee of security, and (promising) to favour him, so that he would return from where he was going. Amr b. Said wrote a letter in which he offered him favour and a guarantee of security for himself. He dispatched it with his brother Yahya b. Said. Yahya b. Said went after him (as did) Abd Allah after dispatching his sons. The two handed ('Amr's) letter to him and strove (to persuade) him to return.

"I have seen the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, in my sleep," answered (al-Husayn), "and he ordered me (to do) what I am carrying out."

"What was that vision?" they both asked.

"I have not told anyone of it," he answered, "and I am not going to tell anyone until I meet my Lord, the Mighty and Exalted."

When 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far despaired of (persuading) him, he told his sons, Awn and Muhammad, to stay with him, to go with him and to struggle on behalf of him. He returned with Yahya b. Sa'id to Mecca. Al Husayn, peace be on him, pressed on swiftly and directly towards Iraq until he reached Dhat' Irq. When Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad had learnt of the journey of al-Husayn, peace be on him, from Mecca to Kufa, he had sent al- Husayn b. Numayr, the commander of the bodyguard (shurta),

to station himself at al-Qadisiyya and to set up a (protective) link of cavalry between the area of al-Qadisiyya to Khaffan and the area of al-Qadisiyya to al-Qutqutaniyya. He informed the men that al- Husayn was heading for Iraq. When al-Husayn, peace be on him, reached al-Hajiz (a hill above) Batn al-Rumma, he sent Qays b. Mushir al Saydawi - some say it was his brother-in-nurture, Abd Allah b. Yuqtur to Kufa. For he, peace be upon him, had not yet learnt the news of (the fate of) Ibn 'Aqil. He sent a letter with him:

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate From al-Husayn b. Ali To his brother believers and Muslims, Greetings to you, I praise God before you, other than Whom there is no deity. Muslim b. Aqil's letter came to me, informing me of your sound judgement and the agreement of your leaders to support us, and to seek our rights. I have asked God to make your actions good and reward you with the greatest reward. I set out to you from Mecca on 8th of Dhu al-Hijja, the Day of Tarwiya. When my messenger reaches you, be urgent and purposeful in your affiars, for I am coming to you within the (next few) days.

Greeting and the mercy and blessings of God

Muslim had written to al-Husayn seventeen days before he was killed and the Kufans had written to him: "Here you have a hundred thousand swords. Do not delay." Qays b. Mushir went towards Kufa with the letter. However, when he reached al-Qadisiyya, al-Husayn b. Numayr apprehended him and sent him to Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad. "Go up on the pulpit," Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad ordered him, "and curse the liar, al-Husayn b. Ali, peace be on him" Qays went up on the pulpit and praised and glorified God. Then he said:

People, this man, al-Husayn b. 'Ali the best of God's creatures, the son of Fatima, the daughter of the Apostle, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace, (is nearby). I am his messenger to you. Answer him. Then he cursed Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad and his father and prayed for forgiveness for Ali b. Abi Talib and blessed him. 'Ubayd Allah ordered him to be thrown from the top of the palace. They threw him and he was smashed to pieces.

[It is (also) reported:]

He fell on the ground in chains and his bones were crushed and there only remained to him his last breath. A man called 'Abd al- Malik b. 'Umayr al-Lakhmi came to him and cut his throat. When he was told that that had been a shameful (thing to do) and he was blamed for it, he said: "I wanted to relieve him (of his suffering)."

Part II

(While this had been going on) al-Husayn, peace be on him, had left Hajiz in the direction of Kufa until he came to one of the watering (places) of the Arabs. There there was 'Abd Allah b. Muti al-'Adawli, who was staying there. When he saw al-Husayn, peace be on him, he got up and said to him: "(May I ransom) my father and mother for you, son of the Apostle of God, what has brought you (here)?" He brought him (forward) and helped him to dismount.

"It is a result of the death of Muawiya as you would know," replied al Husayn, peace be on him. "The Iraqis have written to me urging me to (come to) them"

"I remind you, son of the Apostle of God, (of God) and the sacredness of Islam, lest it be violated. I adjure you before God (to think) about the sacredness of Quraysh. I adjure you before God (to think) about the sacredness of the Arabs. By God, if you seek that which is in the hands of Banu Umayya, they will kill you. If they kill you, they will never fear anyone after you. Then it will be the sacredness of Islam which is violated, and the sacredness of Quraysh and the sacredness of the Arabs. Don't do it! Don't go to Kufa! Don't expose yourself to Banu Umayya!"

Al-Husayn, peace be on him, insisted on continuing his journey. (In the meantime) 'Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad had ordered (the area) which was between Waqisa and the roads to Syria and Basra to be occupied (so that) they should not let anyone enter, nor anyone leave (Kufa). However, al-Husayn, peace be on him, went on without knowing anything (of that) until he met some Arabs. He asked them (about the situation) and they told him: "No, by God, we don't know (anything about it) except that we cannot get into or out of (Kufa)." He continued on his journey. [A group of Fazara and Bajila reported (the following account). They said:]

We were with Zuhayr b. al-Qayn al-Bajah when we came from Mecca. (Although) we were travelling alongside al Husayn, peace be on him, there was nothing more hateful to us than that we should stop with him at a halting place. (Yet) when al-Husayn, peace be on him, travelled and halted, we could not avoid halting with him. Al-Husayn halted at the side (of the road) and we halted at the (other) side (of the road). While we were sitting, eating our food, a messenger of al- Husayn, peace be on him, approached, greeted us and entered (our camp). "Zuhayr b. al-Qayn," he said, "Abu 'Abd Allah al-Husayn, peace be on him, has sent me to you (to ask) you to come to him." Each man of us threw away what was in his hands (i.e. threw up his hands in

horror); it was (as surprising) as if birds had alighted on our heads. "Glory be to God," (Zuhayr's) wife said to him, "did the son of the Messenger of God send for you? Then aren't you going to him? If you went to him, you would hear what he had to say. Then you could leave him (if you wanted to)." Zuhayr b. al-Qayn went (across) to him. It was not long before he returned to announce that he was heading east. He ordered his tent (to be struck) and (called for) his luggage, mounts and equipment. His tent was pulled down and taken to al-Husayn, peace be on him, then he said to his wife: "You are divorced, go back to your family, for I do not want anything to befall you except good."

Then he said to his companions:

Whoever wants to follow me (may do so), otherwise he is at the end of his covenant with me (i.e. released from obedience to follow Zuhayr as the leader of his tribal group). I will tell you a story (of something which happened to me once): we were raiding a rich land. God granted us victory and we won (a lot of) booty. Salman al-Farsi, the mercy of God be on him, said to us: 'Are you happy with the victory which God has granted you and the booty you have won?' We said: 'Yes.' Then he said: 'Therefore when you meet the lord of the young men of the family of Muhammad be happier to fight with them than you are with the booty which you have obtained today.' As for me. I pray that God may be with you." He remained among the people with al-Husayn until he was killed. [Abd Allah b. Sulayman and al-Mundhir b. Mushamill both from Asad, reported:]

When we had finished the pilgrimage, there was no concern more important to us than to join al-Husayn, peace be on him, on the road, so that we might see what happened in his affair. We went along trotting our two camels speedily until we joined him at Zarud. As we approached, there we (saw) a man from Kufa who had changed his route when he had seen al-Husayn, peace be on him. Al-Husayn, peace be on him, had stopped as if he wanted (to speak to) him, but (the man) ignored him and went on. We went on towards the man. One of us said to the other: "Come with us to ask this man if he has news of Kufa."'

We came up to him and greeted him. He returned out greeting.

"From which (tribe) do you come, fellow?" we asked.

"(I am) an Asadi," he answered.

"We also are Asadis," we said. "Who are you?"

"I am Bakr b. so and so," he answered and we told him our lineage.

"Tell us of the people (you have left) behind you?" we asked.

"Yes," he replied, "I only left Kufa after Muslim b. 'Aqil and Hani' b. 'Urwa had been killed. I saw them being dragged by their legs into the market-place."

We went on to join al-Husayn, peace be on him, and we were travelling close to him until he stopped at al-Thalabiyya in the evening. We caught up with him when he stopped and we greeted him. He returned our greeting.

"May God have mercy on you," we said, "we have news. If you wish, we will tell it to you publicly or if you wish, secretly."

He looked at us and at his followers.

"There is no veil for these men," he answered.

"Did you see the rider whom you were near, yesterday evening?"

"Yes," he answered, "I had wanted to question him."

"We have got the news from him and spared you (the trouble of) questioning him," we said. "He was a man from our (tribe), of sound judgment, honesty and intelligence. He told us that he had only left Kufa after Muslim and Hani' had been killed, and he had seen them being dragged by their legs into the market-place."

"We belong to God and to Him we shall return; may God have mercy on them both," said al-Husayn, and he repeated that several times.

"We adjure you before God," we exhorted him, "for your own life and for your House that you do not go from this place, for you have no one to support you in Kufa and no Shia. Indeed we fear that such men (will be the very ones who) will be against you."

"What is your opinion," he asked, looking towards the sons of 'Aqil, "now that Muslim has been killed?"

"By God," they declared, "we will not go back until we have taken our vengeance or have tasted (the death) which he tasted."

Al-Husayn, peace be on him, came near us and said: "There is nothing good (left) in life for these men." Then we knew that his decision had been taken to continue the journey.

"May God be good to you," we said.

"May God have mercy on you both," he answered. Then his followers said to him: "By God, you are not the same as Muslim b. Aqil. If you go to Kufa, the people will rush to (support) you." He was silent and waited until daybreak. Then he ordered his boys and servants to get a lot of water, to give (the people) to drink and more for the journey. They set out (once more) and went on to Zubala. News of Abd Allah b. Yuqtur reached him. He took out a written statement to the people and read it to them:

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, News of the dreadful murder of Muslim b. Aqil Hani' b. Urwa, and Abd Allah b. Yuqtur has reached us. Our Shia have deserted us . Those of you who would prefer to leave us, may leave freely without guilt. The people began to

disperse from him to right and left until there were only left with him those followers who had come with him from Medina, and a small group of those who had joined him. Al-Husayn had done that because he realised that the Arabs who had followed him had only followed him because they thought that he was going to a land where the inhabitants' obedience to him had already been established. And he did not want them to accompany him without being (fully) aware of what they were going to. At dawn, he ordered his followers to provide themselves with water and with extra (supplies of it). Then they set out until they passed Batn al Aqaba. He stopped there and was met by a shaykh of the Banu Ikrima called Amr b. Lawdhan.

"Where are you headings." he asked.

"Kufa," replied al-Husayn, peace be on him.

"I implore you before God," exhorted the shaykh, "why are you going there? You won't come to anything there except the points of spears and the edges of swords. If those who sent for you were enough to support you in battle and had prepared the ground for you, and you came to them, that would be a wise decision. However, in the light of the situation as it has been described I don't think that you ought to do it."

Servant of God," he answered, "wise decisions are not hidden from me. yet the commands of God, the Exalted, cannot be resisted. By God, (my enemies) will not leave me till they have torn the very heart from the depths of my guts. If they do that, God will cause them to be dominated and humiliated until they become the most humiliated of the factions among nations.

Part III

He, peace be on him, went on from Batn al Aqaba until he stopped at Sharaf (for the night). At dawn he ordered his boys to get water and more (for the journeys When he continued from there until midday. While he was journeying, one of his followers exclaimed:

"God is greater (Allahu akbar)!"

"God is greater (AllAhu akbar)!" responded al-Husayn, peace be on him.

Then he asked: "Why did you say Allahu akbar?"

"I saw palm-trees," answered the man.

"This is a place in which we never see a palm-tree," a group of his followers asserted.

"What do you think it is then?" asked al-Husayn, peace be on him.

"We think it is the ears of horses," they answered.

"By God, I think so too," he declared. Then he said: "(So that) we can face them in one direction (i.e. so that we are not surrounded), we should put at our rear whatever place of refuge (we can find)."

"Yes," said to him, "there is Dhu Husam over on your left. If you reach it before them, it will be

(in) just (the position) you want." So he veered left towards it and we went in that direction with him. Even before we had had time to change direction the vanguard of the cavalry appeared in front of us and we could see them clearly. We left the road and when they saw that we had moved off the road, they (also) moved off the road towards us. Their spears looked like palm branches stripped of their leaves and their standards were like birds' wings. Al-Husayn ordered his tents (to be put up) and they were erected. The people came up; (there were) about one thousand horsemen under the command of al-Hurr b. Yazid al-Tamimi. (It was) during the heat of midday (that) he and his cavalry stood (thus) facing al-Husayn, peace be on him. Al-Husayn, peace be on him, and his followers were all wearing their turbans and their swords (ready to fight).

"Provide (our) people with water and let them quench their thirst and give their horses water to drink little by little," al Husayn ordered his boys. They did that and they began filling their bowls and cups and took them to the horses. When a horse had drunk three or four or five draughts, the water was taken away and given to another horse-until they had all been watered.

[Ali b. al Taan al Muharibi reported:]

I was with al-Hurr on that day, I was among the last of his followers to arrive. When al-Husayn, peace be on him, saw how thirsty both I and my horse were, he said: "Make your beast (rawiya) kneel." I thought rawiya meant water-skin so he said: "Cousin, make your camel (jamal) kneel." I did so. Then he said: "Drink." I did so, but when I drank, water flowed from my water-skin. "Bend your water-skin," said al-Husayn. I did not know how to do that. He came up (to me) and bent it (into the proper position for drinking). Then I drank and gave my horse to drink. Al-Hurr b. Yazid had come from al-Qadisiyya. Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad had sent al-Husayn b. Numayr and ordered him to take up (his) position at al-Qadisiyya. Then al-Hurr had been sent in advance with one thousand horsemen to meet al-Husayn. Al-Hurr remained positioned opposite to al-Husayn, peace be on him, until the time for the midday prayer drew near. Al-Husayn, peace be on him, ordered al-Hajjaj b. Masruq to give the call to prayer. When the second call to prayer immediately preceding the prayer (iqama) was about (to be made) al-Husayn came out (before the people) dressed in a waist-cloth czar) and cloak (rida') and wearing a pair of sandals. He praised and glorified God, then he said:

People, I did not come to you until your letters came to me, and they were brought by your messengers (saying), 'Come to us for we have no Imam. Through you may God unite us under guidance and truth.' Since this was your view, I have come to you. Therefore give me what you guaranteed in your covenants and (sworn) testimonies. If you will not and (if you) are (now) averse to my coming, I will leave you (and go back) to the place from which I came. They were

silent before him. Not one of them said a word. "Recite the iqama," he said to the caller for prayer (mu'adhdhin) and he recited the iqama.

"Do you want to lead your followers in prayer?" he asked al-Hurr b. Yazid.

"No," he replied, "but you pray and we will pray (following the lead of) your prayer."

Al-Husayn, peace be on him, prayed before them. Then he returned (to his tent) and his followers gathered around him. Al-Hurr went back to the place where he had positioned (his men) and entered a tent which had been put up for him. A group of his followers gathered around him while the rest returned to their ranks, which they had been in and which now they went back to. Each of them held the reins of his mount and sat in the shade (of its body). At the time for the afternoon (asr) prayer, al-Husayn, peace be on him, ordered his followers to prepare for departure. Then he ordered the call to be made, and the call for the easr prayer was made, and the iqama. Al-Husayn, peace be on him, came forward, stood and prayed. Then he said the final greeting (of the prayer) and turned his face towards them (al-Hurr's men). He praised and glorified God and said:

People, if you fear God and recognise the rights of those who have rights, God will be more satisfied with you. We are the House of Muhammad and as such are more entitled to the authority (wilaya) of this affair (i.e. the rule of the community) over you than these pretenders who claim what does not belong to them. They have brought tyranny and aggression among you. If you refuse (us) because you dislike (us) or do not know our rights, and your view has now changed from what came to us in your letters and what your messengers brought, then I will leave you.

"By God," declared al-Hurr, "I know nothing of these letters and messengers which you mention."

"Uqba b. Siman," al-Husayn, peace be on him, called to one of his followers, "bring out the two saddle-bags in which the letters to me are kept." He brought out two saddle-bags which were full of documents, and they were put before him. "We are not among those who wrote these letters to you," said al-Hurr, "and we have been ordered that when we meet you we should not leave you until we have brought you to Kufa to 'Ubayd Allah."

"Death will come to you before that (happens)," al-Husayn, peace be on him, told him. Then he ordered his followers, "Get up and get mounted."

They got mounted and (then) waited until their women had been mounted,"Depart," he ordered his followers.

When they set out to leave, the men (with al-Hurr) got in between them and the direction they were going in.

"May God deprive your mother of you," said al-Husayn, peace be on him, to al-Hurr, "what do you want?"

"If any of the Arabs other than you were to say that to me," retorted al-Hurr, "even though he were in the same situation as you, I would not leave him without mentioning his mother being deprived (of him), whoever he might be. But by God there is no way for me to mention your mother except by (saying) the best things possible."

"What do you want?" al-Husayn, peace be on him, demanded.

"I want to go with you to the governor, Ubayd Allah," he replied.

"Then by God I will not follow you."

"Then by God I will not let you (go anywhere else)."

These statements were repeated three times, and when their conversation was getting more (heated) al-Hurr said: "I have not been ordered to fight you. I have only been ordered not to leave you until I come with you to Kufa. If you refuse (to do that), then take any road which will not bring you into Kufa nor take you back to Medina, and let that be a compromise between us while I write to the governor, 'Ubayd Allah. Perhaps God will cause something to happen which will relieve me from having to do anything against you. Therefore take this (road) here and bear to the left of the road (to) al Udhayb and al-Qadisiyya." Al-Husayn, peace be on him, departed and al-Hurr with his followers (also) set out travelling close by him, while al Hurr was saying to him:

Al-Husayn, I remind you (before) God to (think of) your life; for I testify that you will be killed if you fight.

"Do you think that you can frighten me with death?" said al- Husayn, peace be on him. "Could a worse disaster happen to you than killing me? I can only speak (to you) as the brother of al-Aws said to his cousin when he wanted to help the Apostle of God, may God bless him and grant him and his family peace. His cousin feared for him and said: 'Where are you going, for you will be killed?' but he replied:

I will depart for there is no shame in death for a young man, whenever he intends (to do what is) right and he strives like a Muslim, (Who) has soothed righteous men through (the sacrifice of) his life, who has scattered the cursed and opposed the criminal. If I live, I will not regret (what I have done) and if I die, I will not suffer. Let it be enough for you to live in humiliation and be reviled. When al-Hurr heard that he drew away from him. He and his followers travelled on one side (of the road) while al-Husayn, peace be on him, travelled on the other, until they reached Udhayb al- Hijanat. Al-Husayn, peace be on him, went on to Qasr Bani Muqatil. He stopped there and there a large tent had (already) been erected.

"Whose is that?" he asked.

"That belongs to Ubayd Allah b. al-Hurr al-Jufi," he was told.

"Ask him to come to me," he said.

The messenger went to him and said: "This is al-Husayn b. Ali, peace be on them, and he asks you to come to him."

"We belong to God and to Him we shall return," said 'Ubayd Allah. "By God, I only left Kufa out of dread that al-Husayn, peace be on him, would enter Kufa while I was there. By God, I do not want to see him, nor him to see me."

The messenger returned to him (al-Husayn). Al-Husayn, peace be on him, rose and went over to him. He greeted him and sat down. Then he asked him to go with him. Ubayd Allah b. al Hurr repeated what he had said before and sought to excuse himself from what he was asking him (to do).

"If you are not going to help us," al-Husayn, peace be on him, said to him, "then be sure that you are not one of those who fight against us. For, by God, no one will hear our cry and not help us without being destroyed."

"As for that (fighting against you)," he replied, "it will never happen, if God, the Exalted, wishes."

Then al-Husayn, peace be on him, left him and continued to his camp. Towards the end of the night, he ordered his boys to get provisions of water. Then he ordered the journey (to continue). He set out from Qasr Bani Muqatil.

Part IV

['Uqba b. Sim'an reported:]

We set out at once with him and he became drowsy while he was on his horse's back. He woke up, saying: "We belong to God and to Him we will return. Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds."

He did that twice or three times, then his son, 'Ali b. al-Husayn approached him and asked: "Why are you praising God and repeating the verse of returning to Him?"

"My son," he answered, "I nodded off and a horseman appeared to me, riding a horse and he said: 'Men are travelling and the fates travel towards them.' Then I knew it was our own souls announcing our deaths to us."

"Father," asked (the youth), "does God regard you as evil? Are we not in the right?"

"Indeed (we are)," he answered, "by Him to Whom all His servants must return."

"Father," said (the youth), "then we need have no concern, if we are going to die righteously."

"May God give you the best reward a son can get for (his behaviour towards) his father," answered al-Husayn, peace be on him.

In the morning, he stopped and prayed the morning prayer. Then he hurried to remount and to

continue the journey with his followers, veering to the left with the intention of separating from (al-Hurr's men). However al-Hurr b. Yazid came towards him and stopped him and his followers (from going in that direction) and he began to (exert pressure to) turn them towards Kufa, but they resisted him. So they stopped (doing that) but they still accompanied them in the same way until they reached Ninawa, (which was) the place where al-Husayn, peace be on him, stopped. Suddenly there appeared a rider on a fast mount, bearing weapons and carrying a bow on his shoulder, coming from Kufa.

They all stopped and watched him. When he reached them, he greeted al-Hurr and his followers and did not greet al-Husayn and his followers. He handed a letter from Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad to al-Hurr. In it (was the following): When this letter reaches you and my messenger comes to you, make al-Husayn come to a halt. But only let him stop in an open place without vegetation. I have ordered my messenger to stay with you and not to leave you until he brings me (news of) your carrying out my instructions. When al-Hurr had read the letter, he told them: "This is a letter from the governor Ubayd Allah. He has ordered me to bring you to a halt at a place which his letter suggests. This is his messenger and he has ordered him not to leave me until I carry out the order with regard to you."

Yazid (b. Ziyad) b. al-Muhajir al-Kindi who was with al-Husayn, peace be on him, looked at the messenger of Ibn Ziyad and he recognized him.

"May your mother be deprived of you," he exclaimed, "what a business you have come to!"

"I have obeyed my Imam and remained faithful to my pledge of allegiance," (the other man) answered.

You have been disobedient to your Lord and have obeyed your Imam in bringing about the destruction of your soul," responded Ibn al-Muhajir. "You have acquired (eternal) shame (for yourself) and (the punishment of) Hell-fire. What a wicked Imam your Imam is! Indeed God has said: we have made them Imams who summon (people) to Hellfire and on the Day of Resurrection they will not be helped. (XXVIII, 41) Your Imam is one of those. Al-Hurr b. Yazid began to make the people stop in a place that was without water and where there was no village. "Shame upon you, let us stop at this village or that one," said al-Husayn, peace be on him. He meant by this, Ninawa and al-Ghadiriyya, and by that, Shufayya."

"By God, I cannot do that," replied (al-Hurr), "for this man has been sent to me as a spy."

"Son of the Apostle of God," said Zuhayr b. al-Qayn, "I can only think that after what you have seen, the situation will get worse than what you have seen. Fighting these people, now, will be easier for us than fighting those who will come against us after them. For by my life, after them will come against us such (a number) as we will not have the power (to fight) against."

"I will not begin to fight against them," answered al-Husayn.

That was Thursday, 2nd of (the month of) Muharram in the year 61 A.H.(680). On the next day, Umar b. Sad b. Abi Waqqas, set out from Kufa with four thousand horsemen. He stopped at Ninawa and sent for 'Urwa b. Qays al-Ahmasi and told him: "Go to him (al-Husayn) and ask him: What brought you, and what do you want?"

Urwa was one of those who had written to al-Husayn, peace be on him, and he was ashamed to do that. The same was the case with all the leaders who had written to him, and all of them refused and were unwilling to do that. Kathir b. Abd Allah al-Shabi stood up - he was a brave knight who never turned his face away from anything - and said: "I will go to him. By God, if you wish, I will rush on him."

"I don't want you to attack him," said 'Umar, "but go to him and ask him what has brought him."

As Kathir was approaching him, Abu Thumama al-Saidi saw him and said to al-Husayn, "May God benefit you, Abu Abd Allah, the wickedest man in the land, the one who has shed the most blood and the boldest of them all in attack, is coming towards you."

Then (Abu Thumama) stood facing him and said: "Put down your sword."

"No, by God," he replied, "I am only a messenger. If you will listen to me, I will tell you (the message) which I have been sent to bring to you. If you refuse, I will go away."

"I will take the hilt of your sword," answered (Abu Thumama), "and you can say what you need to."

"No, by God, you will not touch it," he retorted.

"Then tell me what you have brought and I will inform him for you. But I will not let you go near him, for you are a charlatan."

They both (stood there and) cursed each other. Then (Kathlr) went back to Umar b. Sad and told him the news (of what had happened). Umar summoned Qurra b. Qays al-Hanzali and said to him: "Shame upon you Qurra, go and meet al-Husayn and ask him what brought him and what he wants."

Qurra began to approach him. When al-Husayn, peace be on him, saw him approaching, he asked: "Do you know that man?"

"Yes," replied Habib b. Muzahir, "he is from the Hanzala clan of Tamim. He is the son of our sister. I used to know him as a man of sound judgement. I would not have thought that he would be present at this scene."

He came and greeted al-Husayn, peace be on him. Then he informed him of 'Umar b. Sa'd's message.

"The people of this town of yours wrote to me that I should come," answered al Husayn, peace

be on him. "However, if now you have come to dislike me, then I will leave you."
"Shame upon you, Qurra," Habib b. Muzahir said to him, "will you return to those unjust men? Help this man through whose fathers God will grant you (great) favour."
"I will (first) return to my leader with the answer to his message," replied Qurra, "and then I will reflect on my views."
He went back to 'Umar b. Sa'd and gave him his report.
"I hope that God will spare me from making war on him and fighting against him," said 'Umar and then he wrote to 'Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad:
In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. I am (writing this from) where I have positioned myself, near al Husayn, and I have asked him what brought him and what he wants. He answered: 'The people of this land wrote to me and their messengers came to me asking me to come and I have done so. However if (now) they have some to dislike me and (the position) now appears different to them from what their messengers brought to me, I will go away from them.
[Hassan b. Qa'id al-'Absi reported:]
I was with 'Ubayd Allah when this letter came to him, he read it and then he recited: Now when our claws cling to him, he hopes for escape but he will be prevented (now) from (getting) any refuge.
He wrote to 'Umar b. Sa'd: Your letter has reached me and I have understood what you mentioned. Offer al-Husayn (the opportunity) of him and all his followers pledging allegiance to Yazid. If he does that, we will then see what our judgement will be.
When the answer reached Umar b. Sa'd, he said: "I fear that 'Ubayd Allah will not accept that I should be spared (fighting al-Husayn)."
(Almost immediately) after it, there came (another) letter from Ibn Ziyad (in which he said): Prevent al-Husayn and his followers from (getting) water.
Do not let them taste a drop of it just as was done with 'Uthman b. Affan.
At once Umar b. Said sent Amr b al-Hajjaj with five hundred horsemen to occupy the path to the water and prevent al-Husayn and his followers from (getting) water in order that they should (not) drink a drop of it. That was three days before the battle against al-Husayn, peace be on him. Abd Allah b. al-Husayn al-Azdi, who was numbered among Bajila, called out at the top of his voice: "Husayn, don't you see that the water is as if in the middle of heaven. By God, you will not taste a drop of it until you die of thirst."
"O God, make him die of thirst and never forgive him", cried al-Husayn, peace be on him.

Part V.

[Humayd b Muslim reported:]

By God, later I visited him when he was ill. By God, other than Whom there is no deity, I saw him drinking water without being able to quench his thirst, and then vomiting. He would cry out, "The thirst, the thirst!" Again he would drink water without being able to quench his thirst, again he would vomit. He would then burn with thirst. This went on until he died, may God curse him. When al-Husayn saw the extent of the number of troops encamped with 'Umar b. Sa'd, may God curse him, at Ninawa in order to do battle against him, he sent to 'Umar b. Sa'd that he wanted to meet him. The two men met at night and talked together for a long time. (When)

'Umar b. Sa'd went back to his camp, he wrote to Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad, may he be cursed. God has put out the fire of hatred, united (the people) in one opinion (lit. word), and set right the affairs of the community. This man, al-Husayn, has given me a promise that he will return to the place which he came from, or he will go to one of the border outposts - he will become like any (other) of the Muslims, with the same rights and duties as them; or he will go to Yazid, the Commander of the faithful, and offer him his hand and see (if the difference) between them (can be reconciled). In this (offer) you have the consent (to what you have demanded) and the community gains benefit. When Ubayd Allah read the letter, he said: "This is the letter about a sincere man who is anxious for his people."

"Are you going to accept this from him," demanded Shamir b. Dhi al-Jawshan, jumping up, When he has encamped on your land nearby? By God if he was a man from your land and he would not put his hand in yours, whether he was in a position of power and strength (or) whether he was in a position of weakness and impotence you would not give this concession, for it would be (a mark) of weakness. Rather let him and his followers submit to your authority. Then if you punish them, (it will be because) you are the (person) most appropriate to punish, and if you forgive them, you have the right (to do so)."

"What you have suggested is good," replied Ibn Ziyad. "Your view is the correct view. Take this message to 'Umar b. Sad and let him offer al-Husayn and his followers (the opportunity of) submitting to my authority. If they do that, let him send them to me in peace. If they refuse, he should fight them. If he ('Umar b. Sa'd) acts (according to) my instructions, then listen to him and obey him. However if he refuses to fight them then you are the commander of the army (lit. people), attack him, cut his head off and send it to me."

Then he wrote to Umar b. Sa'd:

I did not send you to al-Husayn for you to restrain yourself from (fighting) him, nor to idle the time away with him, nor to promise him peace and preservation (of his life), nor to make excuses for him, nor to be an intercessor on his behalf with me. Therefore see that if al-

Husayn and his followers submit to my authority and surrender, you send them to me in peace. If they refuse, then march against them to fight them and to punish them; for they deserve that. If al-Husayn is killed, make the horses trample on his body, both front and back; for he is a disobedient rebel, and I do not consider that this will be in any way wrong after death. But it is my view that you should do this to him if you kill him. If you carry out your command concerning him, we will give you the reward due to one who is attentive and obedient. If you refuse, then we withdraw (the command of) our province and army from you and leave the army to Shamir b. Dhl al-Jawshan. We have given him our authority. Shamir b. Dhi al-Jawshan brought the letter to 'Umar b. Sad. After he had brought it and read it, 'Umar said to him: Shame upon you, what is this to you? May God never show favour to your house. May God make abominable what you have brought to me! By God, I did not think that you would cause him to refuse what I had written to him, and ruin for us a matter which we had hoped to set right. Al Husayn will not surrender, for there is a spirit like (his) father's in his body."

"Tell me what you are going to do," demanded Shamir. "Are you going to carry out the governor's command and fight his enemy or are you going to leave the command of the army to me?"

"No, (there is going to be) no advantage to you. I will carry that out instead of you. you take command of the foot-soldiers."

'Umar b. Sa'd prepared to (do battle with) al-Husayn, peace be on him, on the night of Thursday, 9th of the month of Muharram. (In the meantime) Shamir went out and stood in front of the followers of al-Husayn, peace be on him.

"Where are my sister's sons?" he demanded. Al Abbas, Jafar, Abd Allah and Uthman, sons of Ali b. Abi Talib, peace be on him, came forward.

"What do you want?" they asked.

"Sons of my sister, you are guaranteed security," he said.

"God curse you and curse the security which you offer without offering it to the son of the Apostle of God," the young men replied. "Cavalry of God, mount and announce the news of Heaven (i.e. death)," Umar b. Sa'd called out and the people mounted and he approached (the supporters of al-Husayn) after the afternoon (asr) prayer.

Meanwhile, al-Husayn, peace be on him, was sitting in front of his tent dozing with his head on his knees. His sister heard the clamour (from the enemy's ranks). She came up to him and said, "My brother, don't you hear the sounds which are getting nearer?" I have just seen the Apostle of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, in my sleep," said al-Husayn, peace be on him, as he raised his head. "He said to me: 'You are coming to us.' His sister struck at

her face and cried out in grief.

"You have no (reason) to lament, sister," al-Husayn, peace be on him, told her. "Be quiet, may God have mercy on you."

Then he turned to al-Abbas b. Ali "Brother, the enemy have come, so get ready; but first, al-Abbas, you, yourself, ride out to meet them, to talk to them about what they have (in mind) and what appears (appropriate) to them and to ask about what has brought them (against us)." Al-Abbas went towards them with about twenty horsemen, among whom was Zuhayr b. al-Qayn.

"How do you see (the situation)?" he asked. "What do you want?"

"The command of the governor has arrived that we should offer you (the opportunity of) submitting to his authority, otherwise we (must) attack you," they answered.

"Do not hurry (to do anything) until I have gone back to Abu Abd Allah (al-Husayn) and told him what you have said, 'Abbas requested.

They stopped (where they were) and told him: "Go to him and inform him, and tell us what he says to you."

Al 'Abbas went galloping back to al Husayn, peace be on him, to give him the information. While his companions remained exchanging words with the enemy, trying to test them and dissuade them from fighting against al-Husayn, peace be on him, (al-'Abbas) told him what the enemy had said. Go back to them," he, peace be on him, said, "if you can, delay them until the morning and (persuade) them to keep from us during the evening. Then, perhaps, we may be able to pray to our Lord during the night to call upon Him and seek His forgiveness. He knows that I have always loved His formal prayer, the recitation of His Book and (making) many invocations to Him, seeking His forgiveness. Al Abbas went back to the people, and returned (after) being with them, accompanied by a messenger on behalf of Umar b. Saed, who had said: "We will grant you a day until tomorrow. Then if you surrender, we will send you to our governor, Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad but if you refuse we will not leave you (any longer)." (After) he departed, towards the evening al-Husayn gathered his followers around him.

Part VI

[Ali b. al Husayn, Zayn al Abidin, reported:]

I went near to hear what he would say to them (even though) at that time I was sick. I heard my father say to his followers: I glorify God with the most perfect glorification and I praise Him in happiness and misfortune. O God, I praise You for blessing us with prophethood, teaching us the Qur'an and making us understand the religion. You have given us hearing, sight and hearts, and have made us among those who give thanks (to You). I know of no followers more loyal and more virtuous than my followers, nor of any House more pious and more close-knit than

my House. May God reward you well on my behalf. Indeed, I do not think that there will be (any further) days (left) to us by these men. I permit you to leave me. All (of you) go away with the absolution of your oath (to follow me), for there will be no (further) obligation on you from me. This is a night (whose darkness) will give cover to you. Use it as a camel (i.e. ride away in it).

His brothers and sons, the sons of his sisters and the sons of 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far said: We will not leave you to make ourselves continue living after your (death). God will never see us (do) such a thing. Al Abbas b. Ali, peace be on them, was the first of them to make this declaration. Then the (whole) group followed him, (all) declaring the same thing.

"Sons of 'Aqil" said al-Husayn, "enough of your (family) has been killed. So go away as I have permitted you."

"Glory be to God," they replied, "what would the people say? They would say that we deserted our shaykh, our lord, the sons of our uncle, who was the best of uncles; that we had not shot arrows alongside them, we had not thrust spears alongside them, we had not struck swords alongside them. (At such an accusation) we do not know what we would do. No, by God, we will not do (such a thing). Rather we will ransom you with our lives, property and families. We will fight for you until we reach your destination. May God make life abominable (for us) after your (death)."

Then Muslim b. Awsaja arose and spoke:

Could we leave you alone? How should we excuse ourselves before God concerning the performance of our duty to your By God, I will stab them with my spear (until it breaks), I will strike them with my sword as long as the hilt is in my hand. If I have no weapon (left) to fight them with, I will throw stones (at them). By God we will never leave you until God knows that we have preserved through you (the company of His Apostle) in his absence. By God, if I knew what I would die and then be revived and then burnt and then revived, and then scattered, and that would be done to me seventy times, I would never leave you until I met my death (fighting) on your behalf. So how could I do it when there can only be one death, which is a great blessing which can never be rejected.

Zuhayr b. al-Qayn, may God have mercy on him, spoke:

By God, I would prefer to be killed and then recalled to life; and then be killed a thousand times in this manner; and that in this way God, the Mighty and Exalted, should protect your life and the lives of these young men of your House. All his followers spoke in similar vein, one after the other. Al-Husayn, peace be on him, called (on God to) reward them well and then went back to his tent.

[Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on them, Zayn al Abidin reported:]

I was sitting on that evening (before the morning of the day) in which my father was killed. With me was my aunt, Zaynab, who was nursing me when my father left to go to his tent. With him was Juwayn, the retainer (mawla) of Abu Dharr al-Ghiffari, who was preparing his sword and putting it right My father recited:

Time, shame on you as a friend! At the day's dawning and the sun's setting,

How many a companion or seeker will be a corpse! Time will not be satisfied with any substitute. The matter will rest with the Mighty One, and every living creature will have to journey along my path. He repeated it twice or three times. I understood it and realised what he meant. Tears choked me and I pushed them back. I kept silent and knew that tribulation had come upon us. As for my aunt, she heard what I heard - but she is a woman and weakness and grief are part of the qualities of women; she could not control herself, she jumped up, tearing at her clothes and sighing, and went to him.

"Then I will lose (a brother)," Zaynab said to him. "Would that death deprived me of life today, (for) my mother, Fatima, is dead, and my father, 'Ah, and my brother, al-Hasan, peace be on them (all)."

"O sister,' al-Husayn said to her as he looked at her with his eyes full of tears, " don't let Satan take away your forbearance. (Remember:) If the sandgrouse are left (alone) at night, they will sleep (i.e. let nature take its course)."

"O my grief, your life will be violently wrenched from you and that is more wounding to my heart and harsher to my soul," she lamented, and then she struck at her face. she bent down to (the hem of) her garment and (began to) tear it. Then she fell down in a faint.

Al-Husayn, peace be on him, got up and bathed her face with water Then he said to her: Sister, fear God and take comfort in the consolation of God. Know that the people on the earth will die and the inhabitants of heaven will not continue to exist (for ever). For everything will be destroyed except the face of God Who created creation by His power (qudra); He sends forth creatures and He causes them to return; He is unique and alone. My grandfather was better than me, my father was better than me and my mother was better than me. I and every Muslim have an ideal model in the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family. By This and the like he tried to console her and he said:

Sister, I swear to you - and I (always) keep my oaths - that you must not tear your clothes, nor scratch your face, nor cry out with grief and loss when I am destroyed. Then he brought her and made her sit with me. He went out to his followers and ordered them to bring their tents (much) closer together so that the tent-pegs came within the area of each other's tents, and so that if they remained among their tents, the enemy could only approach (them), from one side

(for there would be) tents behind them, and to their right and left. Thus (the tents completely) surrounded them except for the one way which the enemy could come against them. (After that) he, peace be on him, returned to his place and spent the whole night in performing the prayer, in calling on God's forgiveness and in making invocations. In the same way, his followers performed the prayer, made invocations and sought God's forgiveness.

[Al Dahhak b. Abd Allah reported:]

(A contingent of) Umar b. Sa'd's (continually) passed us keeping watch over us while al-Husayn, himself, recited:

Let not those who disbelieve think that our giving them a delay is better for their souls. We give them a delay only that they might increase their wickedness. They shall have a disgraceful punishment. God does not leave the believers in the situation you are in until He has made the evil distinct from the good. [Quran III, 117/8]

A man called 'Abd Allah b. Samir, (who was) among those horsemen heard that. He was given to much laughter, and was a brave fighter, a treacherous knight and a noble. He cried out: "By the Lord of the Ka'ba, we are the good, we have been distinguished from you."

"O terrible sinner," cried Burayr b. Hudayr, "has God made you one of the good?"

"A curse on you, whoever you are?" he shouted back.

"I am Burayr b. Hudayr," he replied. And they both cursed each other.

Part VII

In the morning al Husayn, peace be on him, mobilised his followers after the morning prayer. He had with him thirty two horsemen and forty foot-soldiers. He put Zuhayr b. al-Qayn in charge of his right wing and Habib b. Muzahir in charge of his left wing, and he gave his standard to his brother, al-Abbas. They positioned themselves with the tents at the rear. He ordered (the) firewood and cane which was behind the tents to be left in a ditch which had been dug there and to be set on fire, fearing that they would attack them from the rear. Umar b. Sad began the morning of that day - it was Friday, or Saturday as some say - by mobilising his followers. He went out with the men with him towards al-Husayn, peace be on him. 'Amr b. al-Hajjaj was in command of his right wing, Shamir b. Dhi al-Jawshan of the left wing, Urwa b. Qays was in command of the cavalry, Shabath b. Ribi of the foot-soldiers. He gave his standard to Durayd, his retainer (mawla).

[Ali b. al Husayn, Zayn al Abidin, peace be upon them, reported:]

When the cavalry began to approach al-Husayn, he raised his hands and said: O God, it is You in Whom I trust amid all grief. You are my hope amid all violence. You are my trust and provision in everything that happens to me, (no matter) how much the heart may

seem to weaken in it, trickery may seem to diminish (my hope) in it, the friend may seem to desert (me) in it, and the enemy may seem to rejoice in it. It comes upon me through You and when I complain to You of it, it is because of my desire for You, You alone. You have comforted me in (everything) and have revealed its (significance to me). You are the Master of all grace, the Possessor of all goodness and the Ultimate Resort of all desire. When the enemy began to move around the tent of al-Husayn, peace be on him, they saw the ditch behind and the fire burning the firewood and cane which had been thrown in it. (At this) Shamir b. Dhi al-Jawshan called out at the top of his voice:

Al-Husayn, are you hurrying towards the fire (of Hell) before the Day of Resurrection?

"Who is that?" asked al-Husayn, peace be on him. "(It sounds) like Shamir b. Dhi al-Jawshan?"

"Yes, (it is)," they told him.

"Son of a goat-herdess, you are more worthy to be burnt by that," he retorted.

Muslim b. Awsaja wanted to shoot an arrow at him, but al-Husayn, peace be on him, stopped him from (doing) that.

"Let me shoot at him" he asked, "for he is a wicked sinner, one of the enemies of God, and the great tyrants. (Now) God has made it possible (to kill) him."

"Do not shoot at him," ordered al-Husayn, peace be on him, "for I am unwilling to begin (the fighting) against them."

Then al-Husayn called for his mount and mounted it. He called out at the top of his voice:

O people of Iraq, and most of them (began to) listen to him

People, listen to my words and do not hurry (to attack me) so that I may remind you of the duties you have towards me and so that (by telling you the true circumstances) I may free myself from any blame in (your attacking me). If you give me justice, you will become happier through that. If you do not give me justice of your own accord (as individuals), then agree upon your affairs (and your associates); let not your affair be in darkness to you. Then carry (it) our against me and do not reflect (any further) [X : 71]. Indeed my guardian is God, Who created the Book, He takes care of the righteous [VII: 196]

Then he praised and glorified God, and mentioned what God is entitled to. He called for blessings on the Prophet, may God bless him and his family, and on the angels and (other) prophets. No speaker has ever been heard before or after him more eloquent in his speech than he was. He continued:

Trace back my lineage and consider who I am. Then look back at yourselves and remonstrate with yourselves. Consider whether it is right for you to kill me and to violate the honour of my womenfolk. Am I not the son of the daughter of your Prophet, of his testamentary trustee (wall)

and his cousin, the first of the believers in God and the man who (first) believed in what His Apostle, may God bless him and his family, brought from his Lord? Was not Hamza, the lord of the martyrs, my uncle? Was not Ja'far, the one who flies in Heaven, my uncle? Have you not heard the words of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, concerning myself and my brother: 'These are the two lords of the youths of the inhabitants of heaven'? Whether you believe what I am saying and it is the truth, for by God I have never told a lie since I learnt that God hated people (who told) them - or whether you regard me as a liar, there are among you those who, if you asked them, would tell you: Ask Jabir b. Abd Allah al-Ansari, Abu Said al-Khudri, Sahl b. Sad al-Saidi, Zayd b. Arqam and Anas b. Malik to tell you that they heard these words from the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, concerning myself and my brother. Is there not (sufficient) in this to prevent you shedding my blood?

"If I understand what you are saying," interrupted Shamir b. Dhi al-Jawshan, "then I only worship God (very shakily) on the edge."

"I think that you worship God (very shakily) on seventy edges," said Habib b. Muzahir. "For I testify that you are right. You do not understand what he is saying. For God has impressed (ignorance) upon your heart."

If you are in any doubt about this, al-Husayn, peace be on him, told them, You are in doubt that I am the son of the daughter of your Prophet. By God there is no son of a prophet other than me among you and among the peoples from East to West. Shame on you, are you seeking retribution from me for one of your dead whom I have killed, or for property of yours which I expropriated, or for a wound which I have inflicted?

They did not say anything to him. They he called: "Shabath b. Ribi, Hajjar b. Abjar, Qays b. al-Ashath, Yazid b. al-Harith, didn't you write: 'The fruit has ripened; the dates have grown green; come to an army which has been gathered for you'?"

"We don't know what you are talking about," said Qays b. al-Ashath. "Submit to the authority of your kinsmen (the Umayyads). They have never treated you with anything but what you liked."

"By God, I will never give you my hand like a man who has been humiliated; nor will I flee like a slave," said al-Husayn, peace be on him. Then he called out, O Servants of God, I take refuge in my Lord and your Lord from your stoning. [XLIV: 20] I take refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every haughty man who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning. [XL: 27]

He made his mount kneel and ordered 'Uqba b. Sim'an to tie its reins. They (the Kufans) began to advance towards him (al-Husayn). When al-Hurr b. Yazid perceived that the people were determined to fight al-Husayn, peace be on him, he said to 'Umar: "Are you going to fight this man?"

"Yes," he replied, "it will be a terrible battle, the least part of which will be heads falling and severed hands flying (through the air)." "Haven't you any other way of getting what you want?" "If the matter rested with me," answered Umar, "I would do (anything else), but your governor has refused (any alternative)." Al-Hurr went and stood apart from the people. With him was a man from his tribe called Qurra b. Qays.

"Qurra, have you watered your horse, today?" he asked.

"No."

"Do you want to water it?"

Part VIII

[Qurra reported (later):]

I thought that he (al-Hurr) was going to leave the battle, and did not want to be present at it but was unwilling to be seen when he (left). So I said: "I have not watered it and I was going to water it." Then I left him where he was. By God,if he had told me what he was intending to do, I would have gone with him to al-Husayn, peace be on him. He (al-Hurr) began gradually to draw closer to al-Husayn. "What do you want, Ibn Yazid?" asked Muhajir b. Aws, but he did not answer. (Instead) a great shudder came over him.

"Your behaviour is suspicious," said Muhajir. "By God, I have never seen you act like this before. If I was asked who was the bravest of the Kufans, I would not (normally) neglect (to mention) you. What is this I see in you, (today)?"

"By God, I am giving my soul the choice between Heaven and the fire (of Hell)," answered al-Hurr. "By God, I will not choose anything before Heaven, even though I am cut to pieces and burnt." (With that) he whipped his horse and (galloped over) and joined al-Husayn, peace be on him. May I be your ransom, son of the Apostle of God?, he said, I was your companion who stopped you from returning. I accompanied you along the road and made you stop in this place. But I did not think that the people would refuse to respond to what you have offered them and that they would ever come to this position I (which they have now come to) with regard to you. By God, if I had I known that they would finish up (by doing) what I am seeing (them do) to you, I would not have committed what I have committed against you. I repent to God for what I have done. Will you accept my repentance?

"Yes," replied al-Husayn, peace be on him, "God will forgive you. So get down."

"You will have (no) horseman better than me, (nor), while I am on foot, any foot-soldier," he said. "I will continue fighting on foot to the (bitter) end."

"Do so," replied al-Husayn, peace be on him. "May God grant you mercy (though) what He has

revealed to you."

He advanced, in front of al-Husayn, peace be on him, and called out: People of Kufa, your mother(s) will be deprived of their sons and tears will come to their eyes. Have you summoned this righteous man (to come to you),then, when he has come to you, have you handed him over (to his enemies)? Did you claim that you would fight with your own lives for him, and then have you begun to attack him in order to kill him? You have laid hold of his life; you have seized his throat; you have encircled him on every side in order to prevent him returning to God's broad land (i.e. the Hijaz). He has come into your hands like a prisoner who no longer has the power to use his own life and cannot defend it against harm. You have prevented him, his womenfolk, his children and his people from (getting) the water of the Euphrates which Jews, Christians and Majians may drink, and which the pigs and dogs of Sawad drink. They (al-Husayn's family) are likely to die of thirst. How wickedly you have treated the offspring left by Muhammad. May God not give you water to drink on the Day of Thirst.

Some of the foot-soldiers attacked him by shooting arrows at him. He went and stood in front of al-Husayn, peace be on him.

"Durayd," 'Umar b. Sad called out, "bring forward your standard (for us)."

He brought it forward. ('Umar) put an arrow in his bow and let it fly. He said, "(All of you) be witnesses of who was the first to shoot."

The people began to shoot at each other and to come forward (for single combat). Yasar, retainer (mawla) of Ziyad b. Abi Sufyan, came forward (from Umar's army). 'Abd Allah b. Umayr (al-Kalbi) came forward (from al-Husayn's ranks) to meet him.

"Who are you?" Yasar asked him, and (Ibn al-Kalbi) gave him his lineage.

"I do not know you," (Yasar) answered. "Let Zuhayr b. al-Qayn or Habib b. Muzahir come out against me."

"Son of a prostitute, you wanted to do single combat with one of the people," retorted Abd Allah b. Umayr (al-Kalbi).

With that (Ibn al-Kalbi) struck him with his sword until he had quietened him. While he was occupied with striking against him, Salim, retainer (mawla) of 'Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad, attacked him (Ibn al-Kalbi). Al-Husayn's followers cried out (in warning): "The (other) servant is closing in on you!" (Ibn al-Kalbi) did not notice (Salim) until the latter was upon him. With his left arm he warded off Salim's blow but the fingers of his hand were cut off. Then he turned on (Salim) and struck him and killed him. After (thus) killing them both, (Ibn al-Kalbl) came forward and recited:

If you do not know me, I am Ibn al-Kalbl: I am a man of bitterness and anger, I am not a weakling in the face of disaster.

Amr b. al-Hajjaj, with the Kufans under his command, launched an attack on the right wing of the supporters of al-Husayn, peace be on him. When they drew near, the followers of al-Husayn, peace be on him, knelt down and pointed their spears at them. The (attackers) horses would not come forward against the spears and they swung round to retreat. The followers of al-Husayn, peace be on him, began to shoot arrows at (the enemy), killing some of them and wounding others. Abd Allah b. Hawza, one of the Banu Tamim, approached al-Husayn's camp and the people called out to him, "Where are you going, may your mother be deprived of you?" "I am (in the right) advancing to a merciful Lord and an intercessor who is listened to (i.e. the Prophet)," he answered. "Who is that ?" al-Husayn, peace be on him, asked his followers. "Ibn Hawza al-Tamimi" he was told.

"O God, drive him into the fire!" (al-Husayn) exclaimed. With that his horse upset him in its stride and fell. His left leg was stuck in the stirrups and his right leg was free. Muslim b. Awsaja attacked him and struck his right leg and cut it off. The horse galloped off (dragging) him (along) and his head struck every stone and clod of earth until he died. God hurried his soul to (Hell) fire. (More) fighting then broke out and more men were killed.

Al-Hurr b. Yazid attacked the followers of 'Umar b. Sa'd and (as he did so), he recited the words of 'Antara:

With my charger's neck and breast thrust forward

I will launch myself at them again and again until (the beast) is clothed in blood. Yazid b. Sufyan, from Banu al-Harith (of Tamim), came forward to meet him. Soon al-Hurr killed him. (In the meantime) Nafi' b. Hilal came forward, declaring:

I am the son of Hilal. I believe in the religion of Ali. Muzahim b. Hurayth came against him, crying, "I follow the religion of Uthman." "Rather you follow the religion of Satan," Nafi replied and attacked and killed him.

"You stupid fellows," Amr b. al-Hajjaj cried out to (his) men, "don't you realise whom you are fighting? (These) knights of the town are people who are seeking death. Don't let any of you go forward to fight them in single combat. They are only few and their time is running out. If you only threw stones at them, you would kill them (eventually)."

"True, you've come to the right conclusion," 'Umar b. Sad said to him. Then he sent (the message) to the commanders that none of their men should fight in single combat. Amr b. al-Hajaj and his men launched an attack against al-Husayn, peace be on him, from the direction of the Euphrates. They fought together fiercely for a time. Muslim b. Awsaja was struck down,

may God have mercy on him, (but) Amr and his men withdrew. When the dust settled, (al-Husayn's followers) found Muslim stretched out dying. Al-Husayn, peace be on him, walked towards him and he was on the point of death. Muslim, may God have mercy on you, said (al-Husayn), of them (the believers) is he who has accomplished his vow, and of them is he who waits; they have not changed at all [XXXIII : 23]

Habib b. Muzahir approached and said, "Muslim, your death is hard for me to bear but I bring you good news of Heaven (where you are going)."

"May God bring you good news too," replied Muslim in a weak voice.

"Even if I knew that I would follow you at this very moment, I would still like you to appoint me to carry out everything which concerns you."

Then the people came again against al-Husayn, peace be on him. Shamir b. Dhi al-Jawshan attacked with his left wing (and thrust at) (al-Husayn's) left wing, but they stood firm against him and forced him away (with their spears). Al-Husayn, peace be on him, and his followers were attacked on every side but the followers of al-Husayn fought fiercely. Then their cavalry began to attack and even though they were only thirty-two horsemen, they did not attack any side of the Kufan cavalry without putting it to flight. When Urwa b. Qays saw that - he was in command of the Kufan cavalry - he sent word to 'Umar b. Sad: "Don't you see what my calvary is receiving today from this small number (of men)? Send the foot-soldiers and archers against them."

He sent the archers against them. Al-Hurr b. Yazid's horse was lamed. He dismounted and began to shout:

You have lamed my (horse) but I am the son of freedom and braver than a manned lion. He struck out against them with his sword but a great number came against him. Ayyub b. Musarrih and another of the Kufan horsemen shared in killing him. The followers of al-Husayn, peace be on him, continued to fight fiercely against the enemy until it was midday. When al-Husayn b. Numayr - he was in command of the archers - perceived the steadfastness of the followers of al-Husayn, peace be on him, he advanced against his supporters with five hundred archers so that they showered the followers of al-Husayn, peace be on him, with arrows. They continued shooting at them until they had lamed (most of) their horses and wounded some of their men. Then they moved against them and a fierce battle was fought between them for some time. Shamir b. Dhi al-Jawshan (also) attacked them with his followers but Zuhayr b. al-Qayn with ten of the followers of al- Husayn (counter) attacked and drove them away from the tents.

Part IX

Shamir b. Dhi al-Jawshan turned back against them but (some) of his men were killed and the rest retreated to their positions. (The number) of killed was apparent among the followers of al-Husayn, peace be on him, because of the fewness of their number while it was not so apparent among the followers of 'Umar b. Sa'd because of their great number. The battle (continued to be) fought fiercely and desperately. The number killed and wounded among the followers of Abu 'Abd Allah al-Husayn, peace be on him, continued to grow until the sun began to decline. Al-Husayn and his companions prayed the prayer according to the rite of the prayer of fear. Hanzala b. Sa'd al-Shibami advanced in front of al-Husayn, peace be on him, and called out:

People of Kufa, O people fear for you the same (that happened) on the Day of Parties. If earforyou on the Day of Summoning [XL : 30,32]. O people, do not kill al-Husayn, for God will destroy you with punishment. He who forges a lie will be disappointed. [XX, 61] He advanced and fought until he was killed, may God have mercy on him. After that, Shawdhab, retainer (mawla) of Shakir, went forward, (after saying): "Greetings, Abu 'Abd Allah and may God store his mercy and blessings for you."

He fought until he was killed, may God have mercy on him. Then came Abis b. Shabib al-Shakiri. He greated al-Husayn, peace be on him, and fought until he was killed. Each man of (al-Husayn's) followers continued to go forward and be killed until there only remained with al-Husayn, peace be on him, the members of his own House. His son, Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on them, whose mother was Layla daughter of Abu Murra b. Urwa b. Masud al-Thaqafi, was (the next) to advance. He was one of the most handsome men of the time. On that day he was nineteen years of age. He attacked the enemy declaring:

I am Ali b. al-Husayn b. Ali. By the House of God, we are those rightly (endowed) with the Prophet. By God, the son of a spurious son will not judge us. I will strike with my sword in defence of my father. I will strike with the blow of a Hashimi, a Qurayshi. He did that several times, and the Kufans were afraid to kill him. Then Murra b. Munqidh al-Abdi saw him. He said: "May the felonies of the Arabs come on me, if he gets past me doing the same as he has been doing, (and) if I do not deprive his mother of him."

('Ali b. al-Husayn) continued to attack the enemy as he had been doing but then Murra b. Munqidh came against him and stabbed him. He was struck down and the enemy fell upon him, cutting him with their swords. Al-Husayn, peace be on him, went out until he stood over him and said: May God kill (the) people who killed you, my son. How fool hardy they are against the Merciful and in violating the sacredness of the family of the Apostle, may God bless him and his family. His eyes filled with tears and he said: "There will (only) be dust on the world

after you." Zaynab, the sister of al-Husayn, peace be on him, came hurrying out, crying: "My brother, my nephew!"

She came up and threw herself on (her dead nephew). Al-Husayn raised her head and then led her back to the tent. He told his young (sons): "Carry your brother back."

They carried him and put him before the tent which they had been fighting in front of. (Then) one of 'Umar b. Sad's men called 'Amr b. Subayh shot an arrow at 'Abd Allah b. Muslim b. Aqil. Abd Allah put his hand to guard his brow. The arrow struck his hand and penetrated through his brow, and riveted the hand to it. He was not able to move it when another man came down on him with a spear, thrust it into his heart, and killed him. Abd Allah b. Qutba al-Ta'i attacked Awn b. 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far b. Abi Talib and killed him. Amir b. Nashhal al-Tamimi attacked Muhammad b. Abd Allah b. Ja'far b. Abi Talib and killed him. Uthman b. Khalid al-Hamdam launched himself against 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Aqil b. Abi Talib, and killed him.

[Humayd b. Muslim reported:]

It was like that among us (i.e. many of al-Husayn's supporters had been killed by 'Umar b. Sa'd's army) when a young lad came out against us. His face was young like the first splinter of the new moon and he carried a sword. He was wearing a shirt and a waistcloth (izar), and a pair of sandals, one of whose straps was broken. 'Umar b. Sa'd b. Nufayl al-Azdi said to me: "et me attack him." I said:

Praise be to God, what do you want to do that for? Leave him. While even one of the family of al-Husayn remains, that will be enough to take vengeance on you for his (death). But he insisted: "By God, let me attack him."

So he rushed against him and did not turn back until he had struck his head with his sword and split it in two. The young lad fell face downwards and he called out: "O uncle!"

At this, al-Husayn, peace be on him, showed himself just like the hawk shows itself. He launched into attack like a raging lion and struck Umar b. Sad b. Nufayl with his sword. That man tried to fend off the blow with his arm but his arm was cut off from the elbow, and he gave a great shriek (of pain) which was (even) heard by the people in the camp. As al-Husayn, peace be on him, turned away from him, the cavalry of Kufa attacked in order to save him but they (only succeeded) in trampling him to death beneath the horses' hooves, and the dust rose. I saw al-Husayn, peace be on him, standing by the head of the young lad, looking at his feet and al-Husayn, peace be on him was saying:

May the people who have caused your death perish. For the one who will oppose them on the Day of Resurrection on your behalf will be your grandfather (Ali, or great grandfather, i.e. the Prophet).

Then he continued :

By God, it is hard on your uncle that you called him and he did not answer you, or rather he answered but your cry was (too late) to help you. For by God, those who kill his relatives are many but those who help him are few. Then he carried him in his arms. It is just as if (even now) I am looking at the two legs of the boy making marks (as they trail) on the ground. He took him and put him with his son, 'Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on them both, and the other members of the household who had been slain. I asked about the boy and was told that he was al-Qasim b. al-Hasan b. Ali b. Abl Talib, peace be on them. Then al-Husayn, peace be on him, sat in front of the tent. He brought his son, 'Abd Allah b. al-Husayn, peace be on him, who was (just) a baby and sat him on his knee. But one of the Banu Asad shot an arrow which slaughtered the child. Al-Husayn, peace be on him, caught the child's blood in the palm of his hand. When his palm was full, he poured (the blood) on to the ground and said:

O Lord, if it be so that You have kept the help of Heaven from us, then let it be because (Your purpose) is better than (immediate help). Take vengeance on these people who are (such) oppressors. Then he carried the child and laid him with the (other) members of his household who had been slain. (Just then) Abd Allah b. Uqba al-Ghanawi shot an arrow at Abu Bakr b. al-Hasan b. Ali, peace be on them, and killed him. When al-Abbas b. Ali saw the number of his family who had been killed, he said to his brothers on his mother's side, Abd Allah, Ja'far and Uthman:

My brothers through my mother, go forward so that I may see that you have remained true to God and His Apostle. For you have no children (to defend). Abd Allah, may God have mercy on him, advanced and fought fiercely. He exchanged blows with Hani' b. Shabib al-Hadrami and Hani' killed him. After him Ja'far went forward and Hani' also killed him. Khawali b. Yazid al-Asbahi, may God curse him, went against Uthman who had taken the place of his brother. He fired an arrow at him and brought him down. One of the Banu Darim attacked him (while he was down) and cut off his head.

Part X

The group then launched an attack against al-Husayn, peace be on him, and cut off his access to his camp. His thirst became severe, and he set off towards the dam, trying to reach the Euphrates. In front of him was his brother, al-'Abbas. However, the calvary of Ibn Sa'd, may God curse him, blocked his route. Among these was a man from the Banu Darim; he said to (the cavalry):

Woe upon you! Prevent him from reaching the Euphrates, don't let him get water. Then al-Husayn, peace be on him, cried out: "O God, I am thirsty." The Dariml became angry and shot

an arrow at him which lodged in his throat. Al-Husayn, peace be on him, pulled out the arrow and held his hand below his throat. Both his palms were filled with blood which he shook away, then he said:

O God, I complain to You about what is being done to the son of the daughter of Your Prophet.

Then he returned to his position, while his thirst had become (even more) severe. Meanwhile the people had surrounded al-Abbas and cut him off from (al-Husayn). Single-handed he began to attack them until he was killed, may God have mercy on him. The two who took part in killing him were Zayd b. Warqa al-Hanafi and Hahm b. al-Tufail al-Shabsi, after he had been covered with wounds and could not move.

[The account of al Abbas death is missing from Tabari]

When al-Husayn, peace be on him, came back from the dam to his tents, Shamir b. Dhi al-Jawshan advanced towards him with a group of his followers and surrounded him. The fastest of them was a man called Malik b. al-Nusayr al-Kindi. He cursed al-Husayn, peace be on him, and struck him on the head with his sword. (Al-Husayn) was wearing a cap. (The sword) went through it right into his head and made it bleed. The cap was filled with blood. Al-Husayn, peace be on him, said to him:

May you never eat or drink with your right hand! May God gather you (on the Day of Judgement) with those people who are wrong-doers. Then he threw away the cap and called for a cloth which he tied around his head. Then he called for another cap, put it on and bound it (in place).

[The above portion is missing from the account of Tabari]

Shamir b. Dhi al-Jawshan and those who were with him had withdrawn from him to their (earlier) positions. After a short delay they came again against him and surrounded him. 'Abd Allah b. al-Hasan b. Alieace be on them, came out against them, he was only a boy, not yet mature enough to leave the women. He rushed forward until he stood beside his uncle, al-Husayn, peace be on him. Then Zaynab, the daughter of Ali, peace be on him, came after him to stop him, and al Husayn, peace be on him, told her to stop him. However he refused (to take any notice of her) and determinedly prevented her (from taking him away). He said: "By God, I will not leave my uncle."

(At this) Abjar b. Ka'b rushed towards al-Husayn, peace be on him. With sword (in hand), the young lad said to him: "Woe upon you, you son of an impure woman, are you trying to kill my uncle?" Abjar struck at him with his sword. The boy tried to fend off (the blow) with his arm. The sword cut through (his arm) to the skin (on the other side). There was the arm hanging (by the skin). The boy cried out: "O my mother!" Al-Husayn took hold of him and embraced him. He

said to him:

My nephew, try to bear what has come to you and be comforted with the news that God will unite you with your righteous ancestors. Then al-Husayn, peace be on him, raised his hand and said:

O God, even as You have made life pleasant for them for a time, divide them into factions and make them follow the ways of factions and let their rulers never be pleased with them. They summoned us so that they might support us and then they became hostile to us and killed us.

[Abjar is mentioned as Bahr in Tabari]

The foot-soldiers launched an attack from right and left against those who were left with al-Husayn, peace be on him, until only a group of three or four remained with him. When al-Husayn, peace be on him saw that, he called for a pair of dazzling Yemen trousers (sarawil). He tore them and put them on. He tore them so that he should not have them plundered after he had been killed. When al-Husayn, peace be on him, was killed, Abjar b. Kab set on him, plundered him of the trousers and left him naked. After that the two hands of Abjar b. Ka'b, may God curse him, became so dry in the summer that they were like sticks and then soaking wet in the winter so that they sprinkled drops of water and puss, until God destroyed him. When nobody except a group of three members of his family was left with al-Husayn, peace be on him, he moved against the people, while the three protected him until (all) three were killed. Al-Husayn, was left alone. Despite being weighed down by wounds in his head and body, he began to strike against them with his sword and they scattered, to right and left, away from him.

Then Humayd b. Muslim said:

By God, I have never seen such persistence. His sons have been killed, and the members of his household and his followers, yet he is still as brave as ever and he has not allowed his spirit to leave him. When the soldiers attack him, he fights back with his sword and scatters them to right and left of him like goats when a wolf comes upon them. When Shamir b. Dhi al-Jawshan realised (the position), he called for the cavalry and they came up at the rear of the foot-soldiers. He ordered the archers to shoot at (al-Husayn) and they showered him with arrows until he became (quilted with arrows) like a hedgehog (iZ with spikes). He drew back from them and they stood facing him. His sister Zaynab, came to the door of the tent and called out to 'Umar b. Sad b. Abi Waqqas: "Woe upon you, Umar. Is Abu Abd Allah being killed while you (stand by and) watch?" But Umar did not answer. Then she called out: "Woe upon you (all), is there not a Muslim among you?" But no-one answered. Then Shamir b. Dhi al-Jawshan shouted at the foot soldiers and the Calvary: "Why are you waiting for the man? May your

mothers be deprived of you!" So they attacked him from every side. Zura b. Sharik struck him on the left shoulder-blade and cut into it. Another of them struck him on the shoulder. He fell prostrate on his face. Sinan b. Anas al-Nakhai stabbed him with a spear and killed him. Khawali b. Yazid al-Asbahi hurried to him and bent down to cut off his head but he trembled (too much). Shamir said to him: "May God crush your arm why are you trembling?" Then Shamir bent down and decapitated him. He lifted the head (and handed it) to Khawati saying: "Take it to the commander 'Umar b. Sa'd." Then they began to plunder (the body of) al-Husayn, peace be on him. Ishaq b. al-Hayat al-Hadrami, may God curse him, took his shirt. Abjar b. Ka'b, may God curse him, took his trousers. Akhnas b. Marthad, may God curse him, took his turban. One of the Banu Darim took his sword. They plundered his saddle and his camel and they looted his womenfolk.

[The name of the plunderers and the plundered objects are different in Tabari]

[Humayd b. Muslim reported:]

By God, I did not see one of his women or daughters or the women of his family who did not have her clothes ripped from her back, taken away and removed from her forcibly. Then we came to Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on them both. He was stretched out on a bed and he was very ill. Shamir had a group of foot-soldiers with him and they asked him, "Shall we kill this sick one?" I said: "Praise be to God, will boys be killed (too)? This is only a youth even though he is what he is." And I went on (arguing) until I had moved them away from him. Then 'Umar b. Sa'd arrived and the women cried out and wept in his face. He ordered his followers: "None of you should enter the tents of these women nor disturb this sick boy." The women asked him to return what had been taken from them so that they could clothe themselves again. So he commanded that whoever had taken any of their belongings should return them to them. But by God, none of them returned anything. He then entrusted charge of the main tent and the tents of the women to a group (of men) who were; with him. He said: "Guard (the women) so that none of them may leave and do not harm them."

After this, he returned to his tent and called out to his followers: "Who will volunteer (to go) to al-Husayn and make his horse trample on (al-Husayn's body)?" Ten volunteered. Of these, Ishaq b. Hayyat and Akhnas b. Marthad trampled on (the body of) al-Husayn with their horses until they had broken and bruised his back. Umar b. Sad despatched on that day-it was the day of 'Ashura', - the head of al-Husayn, peace be on him, with Khawali b. Yazid al-Asbahi and Humayd b. Muslim al-Azdi, to Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad. Then he ordered the heads of the remainder of his followers and members of his House (who had been slain) to be cut off. There were seventy-two heads. He sent Shamir b. Dhi al-Jawshan,

Qays b. Ash'ath and Amr b. al-Hajjaj with these. They journeyed until they brought them to Ibn Ziyad. He ('Umar b. Sad) remained there for the rest of that day and the next day until just after midday. Then he summoned the people for the journey, and set out towards Kufa. He took with him the daughters and sisters of al-Husayn, peace be on him, together with 'Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on him. The latter was still sick with a dysentery and was almost on the point of death.

When Ibn Sad departed, some of Banu Asad, who had been staying at al-Ghadiriyya went to al-Husayn, peace be on him, and his followers. They performed the funeral prayer over them. Then they buried al-Husayn at the place where his tomb still is, and they buried his son 'Ali b. al-Husayn al-Asghar (the younger) at the foot of the body. They dug around the area next to the two feet of al-Husayn, peace be on him, for the martyrs from his House and his followers. They gathered them together and buried them all together. However, they buried al-Abbas b. 'Ali, peace be on them both, in the place where he was killed, on the road to al-Ghadiriyya, where his tomb still is.

[These details are not given by Tabari]

Part XI

When the head of al Husayn, peace be on him, arrived and after Ibn Sad arrived on the next day (bringing) with him the daughters and household of al-Husayn, peace be on him, Ibn Ziyad sat before the people in the governor's palace. He had given the people a general summons and had ordered them to be present (to see) the head. He put it in front of him, and he began to look at it with a smile. In his hand he had a cane and he began to poke at the teeth with it. When Zayd b. Arqam, a Companion of the Prophet who was (then) an old man, saw him poking at the teeth with the cane, he said Take your cane away from those two lips. For, by God, other than Whom there is no deity, I have seen the lips of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, touch those two lips countless times.

(With that) he began to weep.

"Does God make your eyes weep?" asked Ibn Ziyad. "Or are you weeping because of God's victory? If it was not for the fact that you are an old man who has become silly and your mind has left you, I would cut off your head." Zayd b. Arqam stood up in front of him and went to his house.

(Meanwhile) the family of al-Husayn, peace be on him, was brought before Ibn Ziyad. Zaynab, the sister of al-Husayn, peace be on him, came in the middle of the group, pretending not to be herself; she was wearing her dirtiest clothes. She went and sat in a corner of the palace and her maids crowded around her.

"Who is that woman who has gone to the side and has sat in a corner with her women?" Ibn Ziyad demanded but Zaynab did not answer. He repeated the question about her a second time. This is Zaynab, daughter of Fatima, the daugher of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, one of her women told him.

"Praise be to God Who has disgraced you, killed you and revealed the false nature of your claims," said Ibn Ziyad as he came towards her.

Praise be to God Who has favoured us with His Prophet, Muhammad, may God bless him and his family, answered Zaynab, and He has purified us completely from sin. He only disgraces the great sinner and reveals the false nature of the profligate. Such men are not among us, praise be to God. "How do you consider God has treated your House?" asked Ibn Ziyad, God decreed death for them and they went forward (bravely) to their resting-places, Zaynab replied, God will gather you and us together. You will plead your excuses to Him and we will be your adversaries before Him. Ibn Ziyad became enraged and burnt with anger.

"Governor," intervened 'Amr b. Hurayth, "She is only a woman and women are not responsible for anything that they say. Do not blame her mistakes." "God has healed my soul from your tyranny and the rebellion of your House," he said to her. Zaynab, peace be on her, became weak and wept. By my life, she cried out to him, You have killed the mature ones (of my family); you have pierced my family; you have cut down my young branches; and you have pulled out my root. If this heals you, then you have been healed.

"By my life," declared Ibn Ziyad, "this is a woman who makes poetry. Your father was a poet." What has a woman to do with poetry?, she answered. Indeed I have (things) to distract me from poetry but my heart causes me say what I am saying. Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on them, was presented to him. "Who are you?" he asked.

"I am Ali b. al-Husayn" he answered.

"Didn't God kill 'Ali b. al-Husayn?"

"I have a brother who is also called Ali," answered 'Ali, peace be on him, "the people killed him."

"Rather God killed him," affirmed Ibn Ziyad.

"God receives the souls at the time of their death [XXXIX : 42]."

"How dare you answer me like that!" shouted Ibn Ziyad angrily, "and that will be the last of you because of (your) answer to me. Take him away and cut his head off!"

Zaynab, his aunt, clung on to him, pleading: "O Ibn Ziyad, haven't you had enough of our blood?" Then she clung on to him and said: "By God, I will not leave him. If you kill him, kill me with him."

Ibn Ziyad looked at her and at him, and said, "How wonderful is family relationship! I think she

wants me to kill her with him. Leave him, for I see him (now) for what he is."
He rose from his assembly to leave the palace and go to the mosque. He went up on the pulpit. He praised and glorified God, then he said:
Praise be to God Who has revealed the truth and the followers of the truth, and has given victory to the Commander of the faithful, Yazid, and his party, and has killed the liar who is the son of a liar and his Shia. At this 'Abd Allah b. Afif al-Azdi, who had been one of the Shiaa of the Commander of the faithful (Ali b. Abi Talib) stood in front of him and shouted:
O enemy of God, you are the liar and your father and (the man) who appointed you and his father. O Ibn Murjana, you kill the sons of Prophets and take the place of men of truth on the pulpit.
"Get him for me," ordered Ibn Ziyad.
The soldiers seized him but he gave the battle cry of al-Azd. Seven hundred of them (quickly) gathered and took him away from the soldiers. At night Ibn Ziyad sent someone to get him out of his house. He was executed and crucified in al-Sabkha, may God have mercy on him. The (next) morning Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad sent the head of al-Husayn, peace be on him, (to Yazid) after it had been taken through all the streets and tribes of Kufa.
[It is reported from Zayd b. Arqam:]
It was brought past; it was stuck on a spear and I was in a room in my (house). As it was opposite me I heard it recite: "Or do you think that the Companions of the Cave and the inscription were among Our wonderful signs. [XVIII, 9]." My flesh shuddered and I called out, O son of the Apostle of God, your head is miraculous, miraculous.
[This account is not in Tabari]
When they had finished taking it around Kufa and had brought it back to the palace door, Ibn Ziyad gave it to Zahar b. Qays and he (also) gave him the heads of his companions. He dispatched him to Yazid b. Muawiya and he sent with him Abu Burda b. 'Awf al-Azdi, and Tariq b. Abi Zubyan al-Azdi together with a group of Kufans, to take them to Yazid b. Mu'awiya in Damascus.
[Abd Allah b. Rabiaa al-Himyari reported:]
I was with Yazid b. Muawiya in Damascus when Zahar b. Qays brought the head to him. "Woe upon you! What is behind you? What have you got?" demanded Yazid. O Commander of the faithful, he replied, I bring good news of God's victory and support. Al-Husayn b. Ali, peace be on them, came against us with eighteen men of his House and sixty of his Shi'a. We went out to meet them and we asked them to surrender and submit to the authority of the governor, 'Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad, or to fight. They chose to fight rather than to surrender. We attacked

them as the sun rose and surrounded them on every side. Eventually (our) swords took their toll of the heads of the people and they began to flee without having any refuge (to go to). They (tried to) take refuge from us on the (open) hills and in the hollows, like the doves seek refuge from a hawk. By God, Commander of the faithful, it was nothing but the slaughtering of animals for slaughter. (It was only the time taken by) the sleep of a man taking his siesta (before) we had come upon the last of them. There were their naked bodies, their blood-stained clothes, their faces thrown in the dust. The sun burst down on them; the wind scattered (dust) over them; their visitors were (scavenging) eagles and vultures. Yazid looked down for a time, then he raised his head and said:

I would have been satisfied with your obedience (to my orders) without this killing of al-Husayn, peace be on him. If it had been me who had accompanied him, I would have let him off (such a fate).

Part XII

After Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad had dispatched the head of al-Husayn, he ordered the women and the young boys to be made ready for travelling. He ordered Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on them, to be chained with a chain around his neck. Then he dispatched them, to follow the heads, with Muhaffir b. Thalaba al Aidhi and Shamir b. Dhi al-Jawshan. They set out with them until they caught up with the people with the head. Ali b. al-Husayn did not speak a word to any of the people who had the head on that journey. Eventually they reached (their destination). When they reached the door of Yazid's (palace), Muhaffir b. Tha'laba raised his voice and shouted: "Here is Muhaffir b. Thalaba who has brought the Commander of the faithful these vile profligates."

Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on him, answered him:

What did the mother of Muhaffir give birth to more evil and more grievous (than him)?

When the heads were put in front of Yazid and among them was the head of al-Husayn, peace be on him, Yazid recited:

We will split the skull of proud men (who come) against us; they were very disobedient and oppressive. Yahya b. al-Hakam, the brother of Marwan b. al-Hakam recited:

On the bank (of the river) a great army met him who is closer in kinship (to Yazid) than Ibn Ziyad (is), the man with a false lineage. The offspring of Sumayya has acquired status, while the offspring of the daughter of the Apostle of God is (given) none. Yazid struck his hand against the chest of Yahya b. al-Hakam and shouted, "Be quiet!"

Then he said to Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on them : Son of al Husayn, your father cut (the bond of) kinship with me and showed ignorance of my rights, trying to deprive me of my

position of authority. (Now) God has treated him in the way you have seen. No misfortune strikes the earth nor yourselves unless it has been written in a book before we bring it into existence; that is easy for God [LVII : 22]

replied Ali b. al-Husayn.

"Answer him," Yazid urged his son, Khalid. However Khalid did not know what to say in reply.

So Yazid answered:

Say rather: Whatever misfortune has struck you is because of what your hands have earned. And (God) forgives much [XLII: 30]

He summoned the women and the children and they were made to sit in front of him. What he saw was dreadful. "May God detest Ibn Murjana," he said: "If there had been (any bond of) kinship between him and you, he would not have done this to you; he would not have sent you in this state."

[Fatima, daughter of al-Husayn, peace be on him, reported:]

When we sat before Yazid, he showed pity on us. An Ahmar of the Syrians stood up and said to Yazid: "Commander of the faithful, give me this one." He meant me. (Then) I was a pretty young girl. I shuddered for I thought that that would be allowed to them. I caught hold of the skirt of my aunt Zaynab and she told (me) that that would not happen. She said to the Syrian: By God, you are a liar. By God, you are (too) lowly born! Such a thing is not for you nor for him (to decide). "You are a liar," Yazid cried out angrily. "That is for me (to decide). If I wish to do anything, I can do it."

No, by God, she replied, God would only let you do that if you left our faith and professed belief in another (religion). "It is me," screamed Yazid, distraught with anger, "whom you are treating in this (way). It is your father who has left the religion, and your brother I am led by the religion of God, the religion of my father and the religion of my brother, she answered, and (it is what) you are led by, and your grandfather and your father, if you are a Muslim. "Enemy of God, you lie," he shouted.

You are a Commander of the faithful, (yet) you vilify unjustly and you have become oppressive with your authority, she answered. (At this) he was ashamed and became silent. "Give me that girl," repeated the Syrian. "Be a bachelor," Yazid said to him, "May God strike you dead!" Then he ordered the women to be lodged in a house on (the) banks (of the river). With them (also he sent) their brother, 'Ali b. al-Husayn, peace be on them. (Later) a house was set aside for them, which was attached to Yazid's own house. They resided (there) for several days, (After a short time) he summoned al-Nu'man b. Bashir and told him to make preparations to take these women back to Medina. When he was about to dispatch them, he summoned Ali b. al-Husayn,

peace be on them. He took him aside.

"God curse Ibn Murjana," he said. "If I had been with your father, he would never have asked me for a favour without me granting him it; I would have protected him from death with all my power. But God has decreed what you have seen. Write to me from Medina and everything that you need will be yours."

He presented clothes to him and to his family. He sent with them in the group (of men under the command) of Numan b. Bashir, a messenger, who brought him (al-Numan) the order to set out with them in the night; and that they should go in front of him but they should never be out of his sight. When they stopped, he should go aside from them and he and his followers should separate around them like a group of guards over them. He should (only) keep away from them when any person of their group wanted to wash or perform a need, so he (or she) would not be ashamed.

(The messenger) set off with them amid the group of al-Numan.

(Al-Nu'man) continued to stay close to them along the road but he was kind to them as Yazid had instructed him and he looked after them until they entered Medina. After Ibn Ziyad had dispatched the head of al-Husayn, peace be on him, to Yazid, he went to Abd al-Malik b Abi al-Harith al-Sulami and told him,

Go to 'Amr b. Sad b. al-As in Medina and give him the good news of the killing of al-Husayn (peace be on him).

[Abd al-Malik reported:]

I rode my mount and went towards Medina. (On the way) one of Quraysh met me.

"What is the news?" he asked.

"The news is for the governor, (then) you will hear it," I answered.

"We belong to God and to Him we will return," he said. "By God, al-Husayn, peace be on him, has been killed."

When I went to Amr b. Said, he asked: "What is your purpose?"

"What will please the governor," I answered, "Al-Husayn, peace be on him, has been killed."

"Go out and announce his being killed," he told me.

I announced (it). I have never heard such wailing as the wailing of the Banu Hashim in their houses for al-Husayn b. Ali, peace be on him, when they heard the announcement of his death. I went back (in) to 'Amr b. Said. When he saw me, he smiled at me and laughed. Then he quoted a verse of Amr b. Madikarib:

Then women of Banu Ziyad raised a great lament like the lamentation of our women mourning (after the battle) of al-Arnab. "This lamentation is in return for the lamentation for Uthman,"

'Amr exclaimed. Then he went up on the pulpit and informed the people about the killing of al-Husayn b. Ali, and he summoned (them to obey) Yazid b. Muawiya. (After that) he went down. One of the retainers (mawali) of Abd Allah b. Jafar b. Abi Talib, peace be on him, went to him and announced the news of the killing of his two sons and he said that we (all return) to God. "This is what we have through al-Husayn b. Ali, peace be on them," said Abu Salasil, the retainer (mawl:) of Abd Allah.

O son of an obscene (woman)," exclaimed Abd Allah b. Jafar, taking off his shoe (to strike him). "Are you saying this of al- ,Husayn, peace be on him? If I had been present with him, I would have preferred not to leave him and to be killed with him. By God, I would not have withheld those two from him and I take consolation from what befell them in that these two were struck down with my brother and cousin, consoling him and enduring with him. He went forward to those who were sitting with him and said:

Praise be to God, Who has (made life hard for me) through the death of al-Husayn. For I did not console al-Husayn with my own hands, my two sons consoled him. Umm Luqman, the daughter of Aqil b. Abi Talib, may God have mercy on them, came out crying when she heard the news of the death of al-Husayn, peace be on him. With her were her sisters Umm Hani', Ramla and Zaynab, daughters of Aqil b. Abi Talib, may God have mercy on them. She wept for her (relatives) slain on the bank and she recited:

What would you say if the Prophet asked you: What have you, the last of the (religious) communities, done With my offspring and my family after my departure from them? They are prisoners and slain and have been stained with their own blood.

What sort of reward is this for my advice to you, that you should oppose me by doing evil to my blood relations? On the night of the day upon which Amr b. Said had given the public notice of the killing of al Husayn b. Ali, peace be upon them, in Mecona, in the middle of the night the Medians heard a voice calling out. They listened to the voice but they did not see any person. The voice called out: O men who ignorantly killed al Husayn; hear the news of punishment and chastisement All the people of heaven, prophets, angels and slain, prosecute you. You have been cursed by the tongue of the son of David, and (that) of Moses and (that) of the master of .the Gospels